

and is prepared tonight to deliver that forward to them. To the people who are out there, those citizens, those first responders, our elected officials, from Governor Pawlenty to Mayor Rybak and right down the line have been there working together, showing that this great Nation when we put our mind to it and come together to relieve the suffering of one another can get exactly that done.

It's with a heavy heart that all of us are here, but it's one of optimism and forward-looking that we will address the needs of Minnesota, and, as the distinguished gentleman from Alaska so aptly put, we're prepared to make sure that this never happens again and another family never has to find out that a bridge collapsed as their family members were coming home.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to another outstanding Member of the Minnesota delegation, Mr. KLINE.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to add my thanks to all of our colleagues here in the House, the Minnesota delegation certainly, and, of course, as Mr. RAMSTAD said, to our dean, the chairman of the Transportation Committee, Mr. OBERSTAR.

While reports continue to be updated due to the ongoing recovery operations, the number of victims is already shocking to us in Minnesota. But these numbers are not simply statistics that might roll off the tongue as a footnote to a tragedy which Governor Tim Pawlenty accurately described as, quote, a catastrophe of historic proportions for Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, these numbers are people. These numbers are the family, friends and neighbors who were simply going home to their loved ones after what appeared to be just another workday. Among the deceased is a mother of two from Savage, Minnesota, in my congressional district, and my heart and prayers go to her family and to all the victims.

Although this is a time of sorrow for many, there are countless stories emerging already about the generosity and compassion of the citizens of Minnesota. From organizing blood drives and volunteers, to caring for the needs of the recovery workers, Minnesotans are going above and beyond the call of duty.

Mr. Speaker, as the citizens of Minnesota have come together during this difficult time, my colleagues in the Minnesota delegation and I remain committed to helping restore the I-35W bridge. Together, we're working to provide the Federal resources necessary to recover from this tragedy, and the fine effort brought forward by our chairman, Mr. OBERSTAR, putting forth \$250 million is so important to us in Minnesota.

In the wake of this disaster, it is difficult to imagine when all the questions will be answered, but the day will come when recovery efforts will be complete, investigations will conclude,

and eventually a new I-35 bridge will reunite the banks of the Mississippi River.

Mr. Speaker, again our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims and their families and with all Minnesotans as we recover and rebuild. Again, I want to thank the gentleman, the chairman, Mr. OBERSTAR, for authoring this legislation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I would like to inquire how much time remains on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota has 5½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin, our neighboring State (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, 2 days ago our Nation watched with shock and horror as the I-35 bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. Many of the residents of my congressional district in western Wisconsin make a daily commute to their jobs in the twin cities. Many of them over this very bridge. Their safety and the safety of all of our residents is our utmost concern. Our thoughts and prayers go out this evening to the victims of that great tragedy along with their families and the community.

But at moments of great tragedy, Mr. Speaker, there are also moments of great triumph, of strangers coming to the aid of strangers, the first responders answering that emergency call, health care providers administering first aid and taking care of the injured during this great tragedy. And now it's our turn. It's our turn as a Nation. It's our turn as a Congress to come together and make sure we pass this authorization for the appropriation of funds so we can begin rebuilding this important bridge but also help the community rebuild and to ensure that this tragedy is never repeated anywhere else throughout the country.

I commend the leadership of the Transportation Committee, the chairman and the ranking member, the members of the committee, but especially the Minnesota delegation for how they've been able to rally amongst themselves but also to get this body to come together during this time of crucial need to do the right thing, step up and to assume our responsibility as a great Nation and come to the aid of those who have suffered during this tragedy.

I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the newest Member of the Minnesota delegation, a rising star in Congress, and the people of Minnesota are very fortunate to have her here at this time (Mrs. BACHMANN).

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

In what feels now like a lifetime ago but was in fact only 2 days ago, on August 1, the world changed forever for the people of our State of Minnesota. Our people witnessed an event so unlikely, the sudden and complete collapse of nearly 2,000 feet of eight lanes of highway, propelling nearly 50 cars in midair for a horrific 60-foot plunge into the currents of the Mississippi River. An event so unlikely that we in Minnesota collectively remain shocked and filled with sorrow, knowing the inevitable sad news that is yet to come once our heroic first responders have freed our fellow Americans who even now as we stand here remain trapped underwater.

Minnesota needs the help and the prayers of all Americans and we appreciate the overwhelming support in our time of need. I know I speak for my husband Marcus and myself. We offer our deepest sympathies, as does everyone in our delegation, to the family and the friends of those who were killed.

Mr. Speaker, America believes in extending a helping hand to people who are in trouble due to no fault of their own, and I want to assure the residents of Minnesota today that we will have help in cleaning up and rebuilding. We will have help until the job is done. Because Congress understands, Republicans, Democrats, we're all Americans in this and we understand that this is not just an emergency for a day or for a week. We will provide the support and the work that is necessary to rebuild the lives and the communities that were damaged until this tragedy is over. And that is what makes America so great.

This bill is just our first step toward recovery. I thank Chairman OBERSTAR for his brilliant work, working around the clock to bring this to the floor. It's inspiring the way so many have come together and worked together over these last few days.

I join my colleagues from Minnesota, a great State that each one of us loves so much, in requesting your support to rebuild this bridge. Once again, I know we can count on you, the Members of this great deliberative body, to rebuild the great city of Minneapolis and again to make it whole.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN), a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3311, and let's build that bridge together. This is an emergency resolution, to repair and reconstruct a functionally obsolete bridge, the I-35, which spanned two peoples, brought two peoples together, across a divide.

And much in the same way, isn't it time that we begin to work together here in Congress? And by working together we will not just build a bridge across a divide but build a bridge between the parties which come in our